



Washington State
Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery



Darrington, Washington

Darrington Prevention Intervention Community Coalition

The Mission of the Darrington Prevention Intervention Community Coalition is to serve Darrington by overcoming substance abuse with courage and compassion.

Demographic Information:

Darrington is a small, close-knit rural timber town with a country atmosphere and a beautiful, scenic natural environment.

The town is home to many "founding" families possessing a "good Tar Heel (South Carolina) background." A whispered distinction exists between "newcomers," sometimes referred to as "flatlanders," and the many third and fourth generation families that populate the town.

Although predominantly white, this town of about 1,400 people is also home to nearly 200 Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe members and a growing retirement-age community.

Darrington School District educates more than 500 students yearly on a single K-12 campus.

The 2010 Census reports the median income for a household in town as \$32,813, and the median income for a family as \$44,063.

Organizational Overview:

Previous Successes in Prevention Initiatives:

Darrington is supported by the twin hubs of the School District and the Family Support and Resource Center, which each support youth prevention programming and pro-prevention policies. Residents also demonstrate an uncanny ability to unite to take on projects of community-wide significance, ranging from fundraising projects to traditional funeral dinners in support of grieving families (funeral dinners are generally attended by hundreds of Darringtonites).

Community Resources:

Stakeholders in Darrington view their human capital as their greatest asset, describing their neighbors as resilient, generous and dynamic people who want to be involved. With their strong community values - family, integrity, and work ethic - and a friendly, laidback demeanor, stakeholders describe living in a community that "takes care of its own."

Existing Resources:

Darrington benefits from a community-involved educational system with "great" athletic programs that are very important to residents. They have a very supportive Senior community, an active family resource center and responsive fire and police services.



Snohomish County

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Joe Neigel Community Coordinator



Joe Neigel has been a Prevention Coordinator for Snohomish County Human Services since 2006. He is a proud father of five children and lives in a rural community where he is active in politics and prevention.



Hampton Lumber Yard. Photo by: Bob Herzer

Darrington is driven by a wood product economy and a timber industry that is in decline. Despite continuing layoffs, the Hampton Lumber Mill remains the second largest employer in Darrington, behind the Darrington School District. Darrington has not been successful in diversifying the local economy

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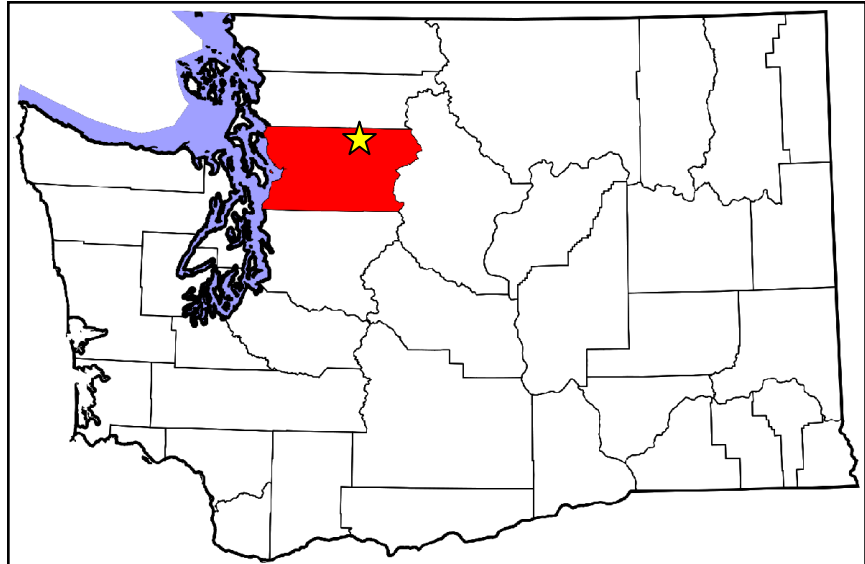
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Snohomish County, WA



Brief Community Profile

Highlights of Local Problems

Darrington is identified by numerous data sets as Snohomish County's most at-risk community across a variety of domains. Healthy Youth Survey and Archival data demonstrate "very high risk" for early academic failure, crime, mental health and troubled families. This community is also at "high risk" for prevalence of alcohol and drug use.

Additionally, stakeholders report a host of local problems but they worry most about a deteriorating community identity as a result of lost timber jobs and income.

These stakeholders noted high poverty rates, increasing drug use and easy access to drugs and alcohol as significant areas of concern. Many believe drugs and alcohol are directly responsible for as much as 80% of the town's crime. Residents cite poor family management skills and a lack of entertainment-related activities for school-aged youth as leading contributors to youth substance abuse and delinquency, including vandalism.

Stakeholders identified additional issues of concern and noted that substance abuse and geographic isolation greatly intensified many of the community's problems, including:

- Geographic isolation
- Cultural disconnect between generations
- Access to pornography
- Families affected by abuse
- Environmental issues negatively impacting local economy
- Generational substance abuse
- Dysfunctional lifestyles
- Lack of social services
- Inherited learning disabilities

Contributing Conditions

Stakeholder's report cycles of poverty and family drug and alcohol abuse extending to the third and fourth generations.

Attitudes on drinking and other rites of passage are deeply ingrained in the community culture.

Although simultaneously viewed as one of its greatest virtues, stakeholder's acknowledge the town's isolation results in fewer job opportunities, a lack of social service and government support and an "individualistic attitude" that can get in the way of the community's best interests.